Facility Stabilization Project

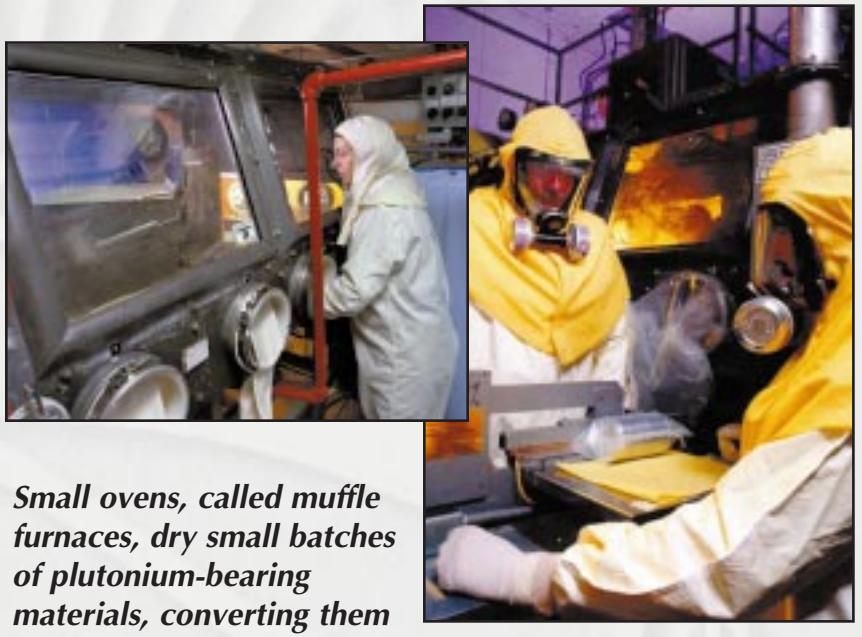
Expectation:

Safely deactivate contaminated buildings to reduce risk to workers and the environment while decreasing cost to taxpayers.

Status Update:

- **We safely resumed plutonium stabilization at the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP). Completed the three-phase startup leading to full-scale operation three weeks ahead of schedule.**

DOE cited five outstanding areas requiring no corrective actions: emergency preparedness, criticality safety, quality assurance, maintenance and radiological controls. "The plant's performance … is a major milestone for Hanford in allowing us to proceed with plutonium stabilization," said Jim Hall, Acting Manager, Richland Operations Office.



Small ovens, called muffle furnaces, dry small batches of plutonium-bearing materials, converting them to stable form. Hanford will use this thermal process over the next five years to stabilize three-quarters of the Plutonium Finishing Plant's 4.3 metric tons of plutonium.

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Status Update (continued):

- Resumed stabilization of high-assay oxides at PFP.
- Completed five technical evaluations associated with future cleanup activities at PFP, as recommended by the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.
- Cleaned out C Cell, first of eight "hot cells" in the 324 Building.
- Completed Year-2000 certification of two key PFP systems for material inventory and accountability ahead of schedule.
- Cleaned the exterior of the 327 Building G Cell.

First reclamation of a "hot cell" in the 324 Building included removing all equipment inside C cell, once used to test tank-waste retrieval and pretreatment activities. The clean cell can now be used to support other deactivation efforts in the building.

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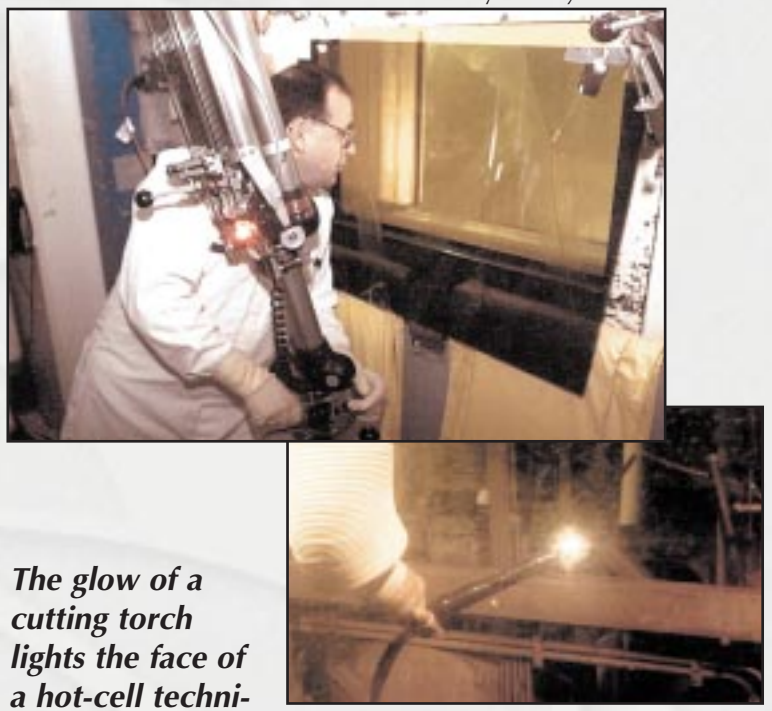
Future Focus Areas:

- **Sustain safe, quality performance at PFP.**
- **Complete new baseline for PFP cleanup.**
- **Characterize core samples from Tank 361, an old concrete settling tank once used for PFP effluents.**
- **Continue 324 Building B-Cell cleanout.**

Photos courtesy *Tri-City Herald.*



The glow of a cutting torch lights the face of a hot-cell technician as he operates a robotic arm to dismantle a highly radioactive pipe inside B Cell in the 324 Building. Final cleanout of the cell is slated for November 2000.